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ABSTRACT

The American educational system is credited by many well-known leaders and educational writers as being responsible for the success of American democracy and industrial society. They say that education builds the state as a democratic society that rests upon the education of all people and builds a foundation for freedom by the opportunity provided to individuals for development to their utmost potential. From the revisionists among historians and analysts of neocolonialism to Glasser's ideas that would modify present educational methodologies and Illich's proposal to deschool society altogether, critics hold in common a view that schools have failed large numbers of children. They argue that schools help preserve the social structure and reinforce the dominant political and economic interests of all countries. A possibility of a synthesis of these two positions is a hopeful and creative one that is logical because many in the two camps have been willing to consider varied proposals for change of the current educational system. One of America's greatest needs is for a comprehensive program of adult education. Three advantages include a better adult understanding of the educational system, extension of courses beyond the formal school years, and lowering of the age for leaving school. (YLB)

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SCHOOLS: THE GREAT AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY, CRITICS WHO HAVE CHALLENGED THE VALIDITY OF THE STORY, AND A PROPOSED SYNTHESIS OF THE TWO POSITIONS IN THE NEW CONTINUING EDUCATION

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The rapid development of the United States from raw wilderness and frontier to the leading industrial nation of the world is in itself a marvel. The expansion of its population was made possible by the immigration of literally millions of peasants. At first glance these traditional peasants, largely illiterate, would hardly be the material from which one would expect to build a sophisticated industrial society. The chief structural element which made possible this rapid development was the American public schools. Critics of this view of the schools insist however that the schools have not been so great a success. As normally presented, both positions are overstated. Few have been the efforts to unite the writings of both groups. In synthesizing the findings of 50 major authors, studies or court decisions, we believe our analysis will make it possible for educators and the public to see a better perspective of the place of the schools as we enter the twenty-first century.

Abstract

The rapid development of the United States from raw wilderness and frontier to the leading industrial country of the world is in itself a marvel which causes one to wonder. The expansion of its population was made possible by the immigration of literally millions of peasants from Europe and elsewhere in the world. At first glance these traditional peasants, largely illiterate, would hardly be the material from which one would expect to build a sophisticated industrial society, perhaps the first "modern society" in the sense that it was not held back by traditional forms. The chief structural element which has made possible this rapid development was the success story of the American Public Schools. These took the children of the immigrants (along with the children of the backwoods) and made them rapidly, often in only a generation, into fully American citizens and participants in an industrial society. Industrialists saw the schools as preparing workers for the marketplace. Durkheim's view of education supported this view of the role of the schools in transmitting to the young the necessary skills for them to take their expected place in society. The writers quoted from this group often include the following: (Mill, 1859; Webster, 1872; Commager, 1950; Butts, 1960; Handlin, 1964; Free & Cantril, 1967; Ravitch, 1978).

Critics of this view of education insist that it has not been so great a success. From the revisionists among historians and analysists of neocolonialism to Glasser's ideas which would modify present educational methodologies and Illich's proposal to deschool society altogether, the critics hold in common a view that the schools have been a failure for a large segment of the children entrusted to them. The notion of neo-colonialism in education examines the idea that the educational system of a nation functions merely as a new form of colonialism which guarantees privileges for that segment of the society in control of its major institutions. Vested interests are posited to be at the heart of this colonialism: education has served to reinforce and stabilize the dominant political and economic interests of all countries. In any event, the poor and the wretched of the earth have not been drastically helped from their positions of failure, starvation, and despair, as proponents of an educational meritocracy would have envisioned. The educational system itself serves to reject or discourage mobility for those who do not accept its dominant values. The majority of the populace is confined and held in place as consumers, merely marking time in its proper place in society. While some minorities do succeed in the educational system, these few are forced to pattern their achievement according to elite economic and social structure of society. Writers quoted from this group often include the following: (Rice, 1893; Harper, 1898; Berkson, 1920; Harrington, 1962; Fanon, 1963; Gordon, 1964; Phenix, 1964; Warner & Srole, 1964; Henry, 1965; Memmi, 1965; Coleman, 1966; Kozol, 1967; Katz, 1968; Freire,

1970; Illich, 1971; Pettigrew, 1971; Carnoy, 1971; Bowles, 1972; Greer, 1972; Raskin, 1972; Reich, 1972; Bowles & Gintis, 1973; Carnoy, 1974; Kinlock, 1974).

As normally presented, both positions are overstated. The USA has undergone great changes to which universal schooling made an important contribution. Yet, as charged, it has had its failures. Every wave of immigrants left behind its quota of failures who did not receive any recognition of merit in the schools or in the job market. The present problems of minorities in America are no different in kind from previous migrants except with growing automation there is less "opportunity" for those who start from a place in unskilled labor, today marked by great unemployment.

It has been charged that America has given three things to the underdeveloped world: (1) a highly developed technology, (2) a corporate model of organization, and (3) universal education. Critics imply that the last serves only to support the first two and that this is wrong. It is quite possible that the underdeveloped world desires the first greatly (at least the consumer goods which are produced) and is willing to accept the second. It may well be if the schools can deliver this and at the same time protect the society from having too many casualities of the acquisitive society, it will be possible for both educators and the public to have a clearer understanding of the place of the schools by bringing the two positions conceptually into one.

Our paper is divided into three major parts. First we will review the literature of the traditional, evangelistic, supportive positive view of education. Next we will examine the

writings of researchers, educators, and sociologists who insist that education has not been so great a success. Last we will conceptually unite both groups. Indeed, few have been the conceptual efforts to unite the writings of both groups. In synthesizing the findings of 50 major authors, studies or court decisions, we believe our analysis will make it possible for educators and laymen alike to see a better perspective of the place of the schools as we enter the twenty-first century.

SCHOOLS: THE GREAT AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY, CRITICS WHO HAVE CHALLENGED THE VALIDITY OF THE STORY, AND A PROPOSED SYNTHESIS OF THE TWO POSITIONS IN THE NEW CONTINUING EDUCATION

I. WHAT KIND OF SUCCESS STORY?

In introducing the miracle of America, various protagonists have been ushered onto the limelit stage as members of the supporting cast. Yet the leading actor is the American educational system which has received a loud round of applause. Many well-known leaders and educational writers have credited the legends of national education as the great success story of American democracy.

Roots of Western public education reach far back into our heritage: Plato wrote in The Laws that education should be compulsory and public. Aristotle posited in his Politics that the state was a plurality which should be united and made into a community by education.

Although centuries later Martin Luther and Rousseau were to express similar beliefs, it was not until the eighteenth century that mass education was attempted on any great scale. By the twentieth century, compulsory, free-universal education was to become a political reality of the Western World. But what has accounted for the rapid rise of mass-education? Various writers have declared that this educational expansion has been linked with industrialism and swaddled in a theoretical base

of idealism. Hutchins (1972:159) has posited that the rapid development of free-universal education definitely seems to have been associated with industrialization and democracy. Adam Smith (1805) also acknowledged a link between education and industrialism. He wrote that it was the responsibility of the state to support educational programs for the populace. Thus educated, the populace could be rescued from the negative effects of industrialization.

John Stuart Mill (1859) insisted upon education for everyone. If necessary, the state should fund such educational activities. James Russell Lowell (1870:239) decreed the general proposition of universal education when he declared that the destiny of the free republics of America rested on a common compulsory education. In 1954 the Supreme Court declared that education was perhaps the most important function of the state and local governments. In fact, education was seen as the very foundation of good citizenship. The Court, in Brown V. Board of Education (1954), added that it was doubtful that any child might be expected to succeed in life if he were denied the opportunity of an education.

The American populace repeatedly has affirmed its belief in the importance of an education for all its citizenry. In the Free and Cantril study (1967:193-194), Americans were asked to choose among reasons for explaining success. Of those interviewed, 71 percent named education. On the negative side, 76 percent said lack of education

was the primary cause of failure.

John Kennedy linked education, prosperity and power in his message to Congress in 1963. President Kennedy declared that education was one of the most beneficial of all our national investments. R. Freeman Butts stated that the story of American education needs constant re-telling. According to this educator, most Americans have faith in education and believe that the educated are more equipped to succeed in the world than are the un-educated. Butts wrote that the most important reason for believing in the value of American education is that it can be a double foundation for freedom. First, education builds the state as a democratic society which rests upon the education of all her people. Without proper education, the very foundation of such a society would crumble.

In his day Horace Mann told audiences that lower classes coming together in cities were dependent on the conscience and funds of middle-class parents, and that public schools they provided would insure the maintenance of public order and the protection of property (Cremin, 1957). Mann viewed the schools as a balance wheel for society, protecting the social order. He asked if there could be any police agency so vigilant and effective, for the protection of the rights of person, property, and character, as that of a sound and comprehensive education. Furthermore, would not the payment of a sufficient tax to make such education and training universal be the cheapest means of self-protection and insurance

(Greer,1972)? Similarly Daniel Webster (1872) argued that public education was a wise and liberal system of policy by which property, life and the peace were secured.

American education builds a foundation for freedom in a second way by the opportunity provided to the individual. In a sense the success story of America is the development of each person to his utmost potential. Without the proper kind of educational direction, the individual will simply be unable to give correct direction to his thoughts and actions. He will limp through life unable to think and reason as he should. He will be unable to achieve the genuine freedoms of self-direction and self-fulfillment. Only an education befitting a free man can engender such personal qualities (Butts,1960:33).

Martin Dworkin (1959:7-9,15-18), in writing of John Dewey, stated that progressivism, as the creed of the early twentieth century school reformers, was the democratic faith in the instrument of the common school (public school) inherited from Jefferson and Mann, but now applied to the problems of training the urban and rural citizenry for industrial and agricultural vocations, as well as for acculturating and Americanizing the sweltering masses of immigrants. Henry Commager (1950:38) has written that no other people demanded so much of its schools and none other was ever so well served by its schools and educators. Schools were not only an expression of American philosophy; they were the most effective agent in its formulation and dissemination. Moynihan (1967:19) spoke in a lauditory

manner about schools as providing the skills required for mobility. Education in the United States, he wrote, has had this deep social and political purpose for well over a century, and there is no sign of any diminishment in the intent. Mary and Oscar Handlin (1964:222-223) wrote that the development of the American educational system in the long run positively accelerates social mobility.

Yet other authors have attested to the values and purposes of education. Emile Durkheim (1956:28), noted French sociologist and educator, stated that education was the influence exercised by adult generations on those not yet ready for social life. The object of education was to arouse and to develop in the child a number of physical, intellectual and moral states which were demanded of him by the political society as a whole and the specific milieux for which he was specifically destined. Durkheim (1956:123) believed that education was above all the means by which society perpetually recreated the conditions of its very existence. As a pedagogue, Durkheim argued that society recreated itself through education. Durkheim's writings about the function of education thus support the more traditional view of the role of the schools in transmitting to the young the skills required for them to take their expected place in society. Education may be seen, then, as a chief moving force in a nation's ascent to greatness. In a contemporary setting, Lawrence Cremin has declared that the public schools have stood as great wellsprings of freedom, equal-

ity, and self-government. Cremin (1951:78) felt that education would have to stand along with the functions of law and justice as one more crucial protection to the normal functioning and perpetuation of society.

Considering the good which American education has accomplished, let us acknowledge the limitations and restrictions imposed upon our educational system: socio-economic status, family background and parental attitudes, the forces exerted by the electronic media and the peer group. Let us not imagine that the educational system is solely responsible for the direction in which society moves. For the limitations within which an educational system operates are severe. Nonetheless, let us not discount the vast influence for good which education has established. Our educational system took the children of the immigrants (along with the children of the backwoods) and made them rapidly, often in only a generation, into fully American citizens and participants in an industrial society. This success story made possible the rapid upward mobility which created our present middle class society. American education prepared workers for the marketplace. Our youth were given the skills necessary for them to take their expected place in society. Indeed, no other people demanded so much of its schools and perhaps Commager is correct that none other was ever as well served by its schools and its educators.

II. CRITICS IN ABUNDANCE

The virtues of American education have now come under criticism, negativism and attack. Many millions

of Americans are no longer convinced that education will solve the problems of the present and future. We are no longer a sole superpower in the world political arena. The war in Asia disillusioned thousands of Americans about the political structure of America. And with this questioning came even greater attacks upon extensions of the political state and the schools supporting it.

Amid politically acclaimed affluence, we have discovered continuing poverty. This "discovery" of poverty, as announced by Michael Harrington (1962) in The Other America, greatly influenced John F. Kennedy and his Washington associates. Harrington stressed the presence of "dropouts" from each wave of immigrants or migrants to the cities who did not become successes. In the ecological battle, it is probable that one-third of all sea life. in our oceans has been killed since the dawn of the twentieth century. To millions of Americans it seemed that our educational system could have taken a lead in preventing, solving and/or alleviating many of their problems but did not. An uneasy feeling, therefore, has come to many Americans that there may be actual chaos in our educational system. The American public has sensed that the American public schools like all large scale organizations are afflicted with bureaucratic inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Even social mobility which once was promised by success in the public schools has been called in question by counter cultural movements as not worth pursuing. Research studies have queried the positive effects of schooling. Socioeconomic status, family attitudes and

background have been seen as imposing constraints upon children which the schools seem unable to overcome. The Coleman Report (Coleman,Campbell,Hobson,McPartland,Mood, Weinfeld,and York,1966:23) stated that a child's family background and the background of his classmates appeared to be the principle factors in academic achievement, as opposed to differences in facilities, instruction or class size.

Has our educational system been used, following the conventional view of history, as a foundation for freedom? Have the poor been helped to succeed in America and has their plight been drastically changed for the better? Or, is there truth in the revisionist view of history, which understands that American schools have been an intentional failure? Are the liberals, progressives and reformers of earlier years indeed to blame for the current functioning of American education (Ravitch,1978)?

The revisionists, most vocal of the critics of American education, share in common a thorough rejection of liberal values and liberal society, and share also the belief that the schools were consciously designed as instruments for manipulation and social control. They argue that the overall direction of American history has not been towards a more just society. Idealism, the traditional view that ideas shape historical processes and mold men and women, implicitly asserts that external circumstances can be overcome by acts of sheer will. An alternative conflict view understands history as a confrontation between different groups interested in controlling society.

Out of such conflict, many of the great philosophies directing world society emerge in times of economic and social charge. The organization of formal schooling, likewise, is seen as a function of the social-economic hierarchy and not vice versa. It can be further argued that education functions to reinforce the society and that no school reform can be separated from the effect it will thus have on the hierarchy of society itself. This view would describe the schools in terms of the extant economic and social institutions and the manner in which each social block fits into the overall social-economic structure. The analysis of the larger structure would be critical in understanding the educational system.

Five questions challenge the educational system. Is its structure patterned after the biological concept of natural selection? Are those who succeed in the educational system products of a normal distribution? Have most students been destined to fail in an educational system which is largely unfair? Is their failure an integral part of the larger failure of American society? Is the vast majority held in check by the educational system, confined and transformed into a passive, consuming entitiy?

These complex questions focus on the structure of society which defines and controls groups as well as individual processes within it. After examining the problem-cause components of this educational issue, we shall look at alternative futures as solutions to the problems in education. The alternatives will be seen to vary from

Ivan Illich's proposal to deschool society to William Glasser's ideas of modifying the present educational methodology. A final synthesis of the conflicting positions is proposed.

The stormy era of the 1960's left little doubt that American education was in for tough sailing; the educational system had come under the great ire of various sources. Paulo Freire (1970:15), the exiled former Brazilian educator, has written that education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the "practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. Sadly, oppression uses schools to achieve conformity rather than freedom.

Freire's basic exploratory ideas are clearly in line with revisionist theorists like Michael Katz, Clarence J. Karier, Joel H. Spring, Paul Violas and Colin Greer. Also Freire's basic concepts parallel those of Walter Feinberg, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, nonhistorians who, nonetheless, incorporate significant portions of the radical critique into their writings.

These men's views question the legends of national education as the great success story of American democracy. In the "War on Poverty" it was expected that the school would act as an effective antipoverty agency. The earlier view credited the schools with taking poor immigrant children and teaching them so well that eventually they became affluent Americans. Yet Colin Greer (1972:vii)

contends that the reality was quite different: the public schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries did not help poor children, but instead, failed them in large numbers and forced them out of the schools. The public schools certified poor children as socially inferior at an early age and thus initiated the process that made many of them economically inferior in adulthood and kept them poor.

In fact, society blames today's minorities for being unable to use the schools as we imagine the poor European immigrants did before them. Greer has written that the economic success of the European immigrants has been highly overrated. Such economic data then raised additional doubts about the popular belief that blacks are only the latest ethnic groups to come to the cities to find their fortune. Greer (1972:35) stated in The Great School Legend: "Having inherited the right to enter the Holy of Holies they protect it with their support of meritocratic privilege and its efficient distribution by the public school system. They bow to the values of individual growth and universal prosperity, the rhetoric of the middle class ideal, but they never judge society by whether it has actually achieved these standards."

Philip Phenix (1964) also questioned the idea of an educational meritocracy. Using the bell curve to sustain nineteenth-century Wage Fund theory (which argued that the industrial world was flat and, therefore, shares

in it finite), the public school selects winners and losers, more losers than winners, for it is on the effective exclusion of large numbers that security of an affluent community depends. Obviously such a distribution is not a bell shaped curve!

Michael Katz (1968:27-49) has written that few poor and working-class children actually attended high school in the early 1900's and before long those who did attend were diverted into the world of work or into designed vocational programs more suitable to their interests and capacities. The common school (public school) was designed to transmit the values considered necessary to prevent political, social or economic upheaval.

Public education, largely as a creation of the middle class in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, was a public institution running parallel to and supporting industrialization. This mass system of education represented a new formal system of assimilation into social order, replacing the church as a mechanism for reinforcing familiar patterns. Education did indeed offer a route of escape from poverty for those few who could use the educational system as a means of changing themselves to correspond to the middle class ideal. Yet little more than this has ever been tolerated by society. The Coleman Report seems to suggest that educational success follows economic success and not the other way

around. Unless this situation can be changed, the poor will have to pilot their lives into society through the economy and not through success in the educational system.

W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole (1964) have added additional information pertaining to the relationship between social class and educational success. They have established that the economic stability of a group preceded its entry onto the broader middle-class stage via education. Warner documented his findings in the story of the entry of the Eastern Jewish immigrant into the small business enterprise and subsequently his son into the university and the professions.

Indeed, census data in 1920 and the following decades up to and encompassing 1960 established that as the immigrants became American citizens, neither the schools nor society offered quite the mobility imagined by many in society. From 1890 on, as far as quantitative evidence allows one to document, the schools failed to perform up to their own claims or anywhere near the popular definition of their role (Rice,1893; Harper,1898:2,66,87,177).

Interestingly enough, Isaac B. Berkson's Theories of Americanization and Milton M. Gordon's Assimilation in American Life show that immigrants whose culture and looks came closest to the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant norm were removed fartherest from the bottom of society.

The assumption that extended schooling promotes

greater social mobility is entirely fallacious, according to Colin Greer (1972:109). School performance seems, rather, consistently dependent upon the socioeconomic position of the child's family. Greer states even today, as at the turn of the century, more than 40 percent of school children fail. This failure reflects the underlying priorities of society, an assumption that a large segment of the population must fail. The schools are therefore doing their job very well: screening out the poor and sending them back into the unskilled labor market. Today, however, jobs in unskilled labor are not easy to find, and such a fact is apparently the source of much irritation in society among minorities.

Indeed the theory of natural selection seems to lie behind much theory of American education. The American dream asserts that, given the will and strength, anyone can succeed in the American society. These feelings ignore the realities of social criteria imposed from the higher dominant majority. The educational power of public education is much overestimated. Revisionists maintain that the schools are an institutional statement of public morality, providing a set of definite guarantees for the protection of the various orders of society (Greer,1972:153).

The basic ideas proposed by the revisionists writers find support from 20th century opponents of colonialism. (See Graham Kinlock for a model of colonialism). One

of the most brilliant of these opponents, Frantz Fanon, has stated in The Wretched of the Earth that, in the colonial territories, the police and soldiers are the official, instituted go betweens, the spokesman of the settler and his rule of opposition. In capitalistic societies, "the educational structure of moral reflexes handed down from father to son serve to create around the exploited person an atmosphere of submission and inhibition which lightens the task of policing considerably. The moral teachers and counsellors thus separate the exploited from those in power" (1963:31).

Albert Memmi (1965:12) has written in The Colonizer and the Colonized that jobs and positions are reserved for the colonizer in advance; the tests are given in his language, causing disqualifying difficulties for the colonized. Colonization is above all economic and political exploitation. Memmi thus denounces the so-called moral or cultural missions of colonization and shows that the profit motive in it is basic. The deprivations of the colonized are the almost direct result of the advantages secured by the colonizer. In this manner, neocolonialism in education can be positioned as a tool of cultural imperialism at the international level and as a parallel to imperialism at the national level. Thomas Pettigrew (1971:Part 1) has identified education as one of the four areas of institutional

racism in the urban context, where the racial crisis is most severe.

Martin Carnoy (1972:1,2) examined the political economy of education in America noting that the meritocratic ideal of schooling has pervaded American education: the best and most intelligent rise to the top in society. The individual is assumed to have free will and is able to go as high as his motivation, desire and ability will take him. Any individual who does not achieve success has only himself to blame, since he did not take advantage of the means available to him. Though the American dream of social mobility may become a reality to only a limited percentage of lower income families, the majority is largely held in place by the school system itself. Marcus Raskin (1972:23-25) described the educational system as a "channeling colony," teaching children how to operate "properly" in a real-world hierarchy by recreating those hierarchies in the schools.

Samuel Bowles (1972:36-64) wrote that the educational system of the United States was developed to serve the needs of capitalism in a growing economy. The schools took immigrants and trained them in the norms of hard work, saving, showing up on time for work, respect for the hierarchy, loyalty to the elite of the new land and the basic rudiments of the new language. Likewise Bowles presents evidence that the school system helps preserve the status structure from generation-to-generation rather

than helping to generate inter-class mobility. The school is thus society's primary instrument for channeling children into social and economic roles.

Michael Reich (1972:67-79) argued that racism is rooted in the economic system, not in the attitudes of the white working class as is commonly assumed. Reich's model, as extended to the educational system, is consistent with Bowles' and Raskin's analysis: those in control of the educational system, certainly not the white working class, have used it to reinforce children into social roles which place Blacks and Mexican-American children at the bottom of the society. In the name of increasing consumption worldwide, the United States has exported these structures to the rest of the world: modern, dehumanizing capital-intensive technology, the corporate form, and universal schooling.

Jonathan Kozol (1967:48) looked at the destruction of the hearts and minds of Negro children in the Boston Public Schools. Kozol argues that poor schooling for the Negro population is a problem of waste of years, loss of chances, closing of avenues and the end of hopes.

Martin Carnoy (1974:19) looked seriously at schooling as internal colonialism. He has asserted that the schools are colonialistic in that they attempt to impose economic and political relationships in the society, especially on those children who gain least (or lose most) from those relationships. Schools therefore demand the most

passive response from those groups in society which are the most oppressed by the economic and political system, and allow the most active participation and learning from those who are least likely to want change.

Carnoy has stated that schooling was never designed as a tool to incorporate people into the economic structure until captalism began to dominate the national economy and needed their labor. The educational system has become an institution for social control, hierarchieal skill production and colonization. Carnoy's sketches in historiography show how the educational system has changed to meet the changing needs of the dominant capitalistic classes, thereby promoting and maintaining class structures. It is the wealthy who maintain their power and position of wealth by supporting specific ways of life and institutions. These dominant economic and social groups have acted in their common interest through legislation and influence to further their specific aims.

The schools are largely selectors and socializers, rather than the means through which individuals can fulfill their potentials. Furthermore, the schools have succeeded very well in their main function: transmission of the social and economic structures from generation to generation. Specifically, the schools have served to prepare a disciplined working force. Carnoy (1974:240) maintains that one of the most important objectives of centralized, state school systems was to

form a new working class for industrial growth. Schools had to inculcate behavior patterns relevant to working in factories instead of farms. Critical to factory work patterns was a sense of time and authority. The school taught these qualities. If the student responded to the reward system in the classroom and submitted to the authority of the educational leader, he would be an obedient worker.

In short, the educational system has functioned as a new form of colonialism. Vested interests are posited to be at the heart of this colonialism: education has served to reinforce and stabilize the dominant political and economic interests of all countries. It is felt that the colonial element in schooling is exemplified in its attempt to gain the acceptance for the unacceptable, that is for structures which are oppressive! It is impossible to prove that schooling contributes to an individual's colonization of course. Such propositions require interpretation of historical data. But face we must the critics' charge that our educational system is neocolonialistic in structure, that a racial elite develops a system of education for economic and political purposes.

Colin Greer (1972:xii) has tersely written that there is no precedent to comfort the belief that there is hope for society through the schools.

Jules Henry (1971:40) asserted that very poor Negro children lack both the hope of achievement and the fear of not achieving; these traits come from a culture lacking the characteristics of order which are fundamental to the achieveing middle-class structure. Specifically, the homes of the very poor Negro children are physically and personally disorganized; their lives are not run on a schedule. Both emotionally and cognitively, these children lack the structure on which a conventional educational system can be built.

Henry (1965:178) noted as well that the function of the high school was not so much the communication of knowledge as it was obligating children finally to accept the grading system as a measure of their own excellence. A function of the process of the American educational system was seen as making children willing to accept, not their own, but a global assortment of other standards, like the grading system. Henry noted that American classrooms were like educational institutions anywhere. They expressed the values, preoccupations and fears found in the culture as a whole. Henry posited that today the values of hard work, thrift and abstemiousness no longer pay off. Big business, aided by social psychology and psychoanalysis, has spent vast sums channeling people's unconscious cravings into consumption. Throughout his life the child is taught to be wooly-minded and uncritical, beginning with a school system which never

taught him to think.

From another angle of attack, many writers began to question societal structures, of which education was one. For example, Ivan Illich (1971:74) wrote that the schools were not dependent variables. His study of world education led him to conclude that there is a worldwide tendency for the schools of a particular society to perpetuate the myth, modes of production and methods of social control of that society.

Some radicals (Katz, Bowles and Gintis, Karier, Violas, and Spring) questioned if there ever was much mobility in American education. They argue that the existence of the schools made it possible to legitimize inequality by appearing to offer equal opportunity to succeed through education. Instead, only those from high-status families do well in school, so that the injustice of the social order is reproduced and perpetuated through the myth and mechanism of the public school.

The writings of Bowles and Gintis (1973) state that the educational system is only one of several institutions which serve to perpetuate economic inequality and social immobility. Schools as a stratifying device might decrease upward mobility by establishing a meritocracy, a caste system based on social class and credentials. Thus, Bowles and Gintis say that schools

merely reproduce the class system. Higher levels of schooling and economic success tend to go together, but the causal linkage is different (opposite) than most people think, since those who are already economically advantaged get more years of schooling. In such a manner, the school success story has been challenged.

III. CAN THERE BE A SYNTHESIS OF THE OPPOSING POSITIONS?

The above cited analyses which have either praised the American public schools or criticized them might be joined with a third position which seeks to reconcile the opposing positions. This possibility of a synthesis is a hopeful and creative one which is all the more logical because many of the two camps have been willing to consider varied and diverse proposals for change or amendment of the current educational system. These suggestions for needed change provide a background for coming to a synthesis.

John Howard Griffin (1977:208), in Black Like Me (the story of a white man who darkened his skin pigment in order to travel and live as a Negro in the South), concluded that the path of separation might "be the shortest route to an authentic communication in the future when black and white can truly speak as equals." In such a case the white would not speak of conceding to the black or state that he wants to help the black

"overcome" their blackness. Griffin (1977:149) also stressed that economic emancipation is necessary for any key to the racial solution.

Paulo Freire (1970:185) calls for a theory of action. For just as the oppressor has a theory, in order to dominate, so the oppressed must seek a theory. Freire calls for a "problem posing" education. He wants an attempt to concientizar (make politically aware) children and adults who are colonized and oppressed.

Ivan Illich rejects the schools as the reproductive system of a consumer society. He calls for the liberation of each society through a reversal of its educational structure. Illich (1971:78-79) proposes a viable access system to educational resources. Such a system would consist of reference services to educational objects, skill exchanges, peer-matching and reference services to educate-at-large. Colin Greer states that Illich is correct in his conviction that schools are what they are today as a result of their "traditional , consistent, ideological limitations." Nevertheless, states Greer (1972:56), Illich's call for deschooling (eradication of compulsory public schooling) is "finally as superficial...as the more traditional school analysts' devotion to the great school legend."

William Glasser (1969:59-72) would patch up the system. He would foster student involvement and responsibility. He would abolish grading and testing, negate

the use of the normal curve approach (which makes As and Bs a minority in grading), do away with closed-book examinations and stop excessive, tedious and irrelevant homework.

Thomas Pettigrew (1971:xvii) would have "genuine racial integration as a necessary condition for the eradication of white racism at both the individual and institutional levels."

Colin Greer (1972:111-112) adds that there is no valid educational philosophy on which to build and thus there is a need for serious studies in these areas. With an understanding of what schools are, we could try to mobilize them in the direction they should go.

Frantz Fanon (1963:255) declares that we need a model and that we want blueprints and examples. But he asks that we not imitate Europe. He states "let us pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her. If we wish to reply to the expectations of Europe, it is no good sending them back a reflection, even an ideal reflection, of their society and their thought with which from time to time they feel immeasurably sickened." The source of the model is not stated. The European model is the liberal arts model. Other possibilities might be a research model, "back to the basics" in elementary and secondary education, community based continuing

education, a "revival" of religion due to questioning the liberal movement, or combinations of the above.

Albert Memmi (1965:107) considers self-rejection the first step on the path to revolt and liberation. He calls for the operative mechanisms of information/ educational campaigns and political awareness.

Colin Greer (1972:xiii) concludes that escape for the poor is through the economy and not the schools. He calls therefore for the government to create jobs for the unemployed and underemployed and help change their economic condition. Then our schools can begin to assume the character which the great school legend has so wrongly claimed it has had.

Our proposed synthesis does not come merely by adding together the elements cited: Separation of "races"; economic emancipation; "problem-posing" education; a flexible access system to educational resources; change or abolition of grading, testing, use of the "normal" curve, irrelevant homework, etc.; "genuine racial integration" to eradicate white racism; a new philosophy or new model; or economic change. These might be realized in a flexible system but hardly in a highly structured system. If we recognize the prospects for continuing education, the need for flexibility becomes the greater.

One out of five American adults lacks the basic skills and knowledge needed to earn a living and maintain a home and family. Over 51 million Americans do not have

a high school diploma or its equivalent. Of these, 15 million have less than an eighth grade education. Largely unemployed or underemployed, these millions have rechanneled their frustration and despondency back to their families and communities (Yearbook of Adult and Continuing Education, 1977:35).

Furthermore, it appears that cybernetic advances will continually erase thousands of jobs per year in the work force. This may be leading to a multigeneration permanent welfare class in a social welfare state. To declare emphatically that the unemployed are jobless because of their lack of initiative to seek employment is challenged by many minority leaders. Certainly present jobs are being abolished and unemployment is high. Many of the unemployed, we firmly believe, can be helped from their joblessness but this may well be in jobs that do not now exist. The ability to anticipate a job yet to be created requires a degree of financial stability as well as personal equanimity if the flood of the expanding welfare class is to begin to ebb.

Dr. Ralph Tyler, in a speech at Texas Tech University in 1979, addressed a logic of our thinking. According to Tyler, adult education will be a looming educational problem. We see it rather as a solution to a problem and as a bridge joining the two diverse camps of educational

writers.

John Goodlad sees continuing education as one of the real frontiers for education in the remainder of this century. Goodlad believes that the trend is toward continuing education. Citizens, who have left the formal schooling process will have greater opportunity of returning to the schools at any time or age level. Such a process will help the schools turn outward in their curriculum (Klein,1976:568).

Hutchins (1972:214) has written that the answer to questions about what the schools can accomplish depends in large part on what other social institutions are doing. The family, for example, has a tremendous influence on the education of its members. Such was the finding of the Plowden Report in England (1969:381-82). This report and others led Daniel and Laurel Tanner to conclude that there was no way for the adverse cultural effects of the home to be erased in any educational program (1971:23). Families, therefore, without some reasonable sort of financial resources and security, are extremely unlikely to change their attitudes about their children's schooling. Hutchins (1972:216) notes however that socioeconomic status does have some correlation with parental views of and interest in education. In a supportive sense, if the socioeconomic status of a family were the sole effect on educational attitudes, then the schools would be very limited in their role

of preparing children for their role in society, that role being determined mainly by their socioeconomic statues. The Tanners (1971:23) conclude that our new urban immigrants and their children are remaining at too low a cultural and educational level to function successfully in society. If, however, they are given language facility, knowledge, skills and attitudes, they can then enter the society if they wish.

In view of these notations, we believe that one of our countries greatest needs is for a comprehensive program of adult education. Certainly this is the conclusion of Robert Hutchins (1972:216-217) who posits three advantages for an increased emphasis on adult education. Adults, after being exposed to such a comprehensive program, would at least have an idea of what their children are up against. Second, such a comprehensive program could have a dramatic effect on the curriculum of the schools. The effect would be to lessen the proliferation of courses being packed into the limited time of formal school years. If the chance to learn were left open to the adult, the maturity and experience of life would foster greater comprehension. Third, our society could lower the age for leaving school. Nothing we know in biology or society suggests that subjects have to be taught between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. With sexual maturity at puberty, it is

hard to convince adolescents that they are not men and women although school systems have long tried.

It is our belief that the lowering of the school-leaving age would be readily welcomed in two ways. First, consider the statements of numerous teachers that a number of students have no desire to learn, merely mark time, accomplish little in school and eventually wear out many of their instructors. Under the proposal of lowering the school-leaving age, the school environment would be enhanced. Second, Hutchins (1972:217) envisions greater parent interest in curriculum revision. Our schools would have the needed community input which is so often lacking today. Yet what will happen to the custodial function of the school? There could be part-time schooling. The continuation school, in session in the later afternoon and evenings, could be made compulsory up to a certain age.

To facilitate a return to schooling by those who chose to leave early, our society could also offer part-time adult education to every person at every stage of adult life. An example is Denmark, which has a low school-leaving age and a system of continuing schools. First, Danish high schools are for grown-up persons, not for children. A Danish farmer, for example, will have saved money for years to be able to take course work. Arnold Toynbee has written that the Danish system is a foretaste of an educational advance for the future

(Gross,1963:135). If recognized by the educational leadership, such a system in the United States could be supplied in response to our national problems of unemployment, need for general adult improvement and the requirements of a continually changing technology. Certain individuals on welfare could be required to participate in continuing education programs in their cities rather than disqualified from welfare because they desire to "improve themselves" as presently is often the case. Funding could be similar to that of our present educational system. The individuals served, however, would be vastly changed. We can envision only good emerging from such an adjustment in our educational system. Those adults wanting additional educational help would be given such. Those adolescents needing working experiences in addition to purely academic education would be given such. Most important, the door of the continual upgrading of their education would remain open. Within this decade the U.S. Office on Education (now upgraded to cabinet status) has taken the position that adult education and lifetime continuing education are the most critical education tasks facing the nation. A variety of studies were financed by the Office on Education, including the Adult Performance Level Study (APL) conducted at the University of Texas at Austin between 1971 and 1974. The results were not reassuring, for the Texas study indicated that less than half of

the adult population of the U.S. is proficient in dealing with everyday problems and opportunities like getting a job, buying wisely, and making use of community resources. In response to such needs the office gave priority to developing new programs for adults. If the present and future administrations do not back away from this priority, such programs may be among the most creative ventures in U.S. educational history. (See Appendix A for more information on the OE proposal). We see great value in the Office of Education's suggestions but we would tie them together with changes in structuring of education.

SUMMARY

Both American society and its institution of education are facing problems. Evaluations of the current educational system that are either totally approving or totally critical are not greatly helpful. Clearly both positive and negative evaluations of our current educational system should be seriously considered. Education in the liberal tradition has done much for America; yet it fell far short of what was expected of it. The prolongation of public education into later adolescence was part of an effort to reach these high expectations. At the same time the "drop out" problem or "push out" problem indicates that all is not well with the system. We see

signs of a solution to the problems by embracing what at first seem to be opposites: an earlier departure from compulsory education but an easing of return to the classroom for programs of continuing education. If there is substance to the assumption that people learn best when they want to learn, such flexibility has merit. In traditional education the "readiness" for learning is imparted largely from family expectations. For the poor and disadvantaged who do not have these expectations, alternative motivations are necessary. Even the person who drops out of school may later regret this action. An avenue of free return at a time when needs may be evaluated on a more mature basis provides an opportunity for schools to meet personal and national needs.

Any educational system which penalizes a child because of his family's economic position or cultural heritage will not provide for positive learning. Both camps recognize the contribution that schools have made to industrialization, although they view the outcome differently. Our concern is with education that makes possible entry into the industrialized economy without producing too many casualties along the way; casualties there will be to those people not motivated for academic learning if they are punished for its lack. Flexibility of approaches will be necessary even though it runs

counter to "standards" and a century of "standardization." If the individual who missed certain skills when these were offered on a predetermined schedule can reenter the system to get them when the need has become clear, he (she) will learn! This teaching in adulthood should not be more expensive to society than it would have been in adolescence, provided the reluctant prisoners of the classrooms are allowed their freedom in adolescence until they wish to return. Much of the behavior problems, disorder, and vandalism of the overcrowded schools is caused by those "pupils" (one should not say "students") who do not want to be there anyway. Yet our industrialized society may not be able to afford in the long run a permanent low skill segment of the labor force which industry does not want and which will become a permanent welfare class.

Lifetime availability of continuing education has become the rule for many professional fields such as medicine, law, engineering, and increasingly in other areas. It can just as well be applied to that segment of society which is otherwise in a category of unskilled labor.

APPENDIX A

TOWARD LIFELONG LEARNING: A LOOK AHEAD

What does the future hold for adult education?

The APL study and other adult education research have developed reliable measures of functional competence which group adults on the basis of their ability to perform in society rather than by grade level. Over the next five years, practical adult education models will be developed and field tested in virtually all states. Models found reliable will be moved throughout the field via newly developed national, regional, and state dissemination systems. This should result in a more effective network of programs to help adults achieve at least a minimum level of competency so they can function better in their daily lives.

At the same time, a new national policy, outlined in the Education Amendments of 1976, has changed the concept of education to one of lifelong learning. This would provide learning opportunities for all adults regardless of age, income, education, or occupation. Under this new authority, the Education Division will study existing lifelong learning programs and methods of financing them, and recommend alternative policies and legislation for the future.

Grants and contracts may be made to states and public and private agencies to support a variety of projects to plan, develop, test, and demonstrate successful programs as well as to develop better ways to meet the lifelong learning needs of adults.

FEDERAL FUNDING AND ENROLLMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

FISCAL YEARS 1965-77

YEAR	EXPENDITURE (in thousands)	ENROLLMENTS
1977	$ 71,500	750,000
1976	67,500	708,500
1975	67,500	708,500
1974	59,266	960,295
1973	50,693	822,469
1972	49,693	820,514
1971	41,534	620,922
1970	37,992	535,613
1969	34,608	484,626
1968	29,337	455,730
1967	25,427	388,935
1966	32,562	377,660
1965	3,147	37,991
TOTAL	$587,839	7,667,861

For further information:

Adult Education Program
Bureau of Occupational and
Adult Education
U.S. Office of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202
Telephone: 202-245-2555

Education Briefing Paper, U.S. Department of HEW, Education Division, Washington, D.C. November 1976.

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